

B-4439

ST. GREGORY'S SCHOOL AND RECTORY

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

Today's church is housed in the former parochial school. The original church, a magnificent Gothic Revival stone edifice, was demolished in the 1970s. The church school, a brick Renaissance Revival structure, was built in 1884. The other standing structure of the complex is the original Rectory, a Gothic Revival stone structure built between 1896-1901. Access to the church is fairly public. Access to the Rectory is restricted.

D INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES FORM  
SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER SURVEY

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Gregory's School and Rectory

other names/site number St. Gregory the Great Church/ B-4439

2. Location

street & number 1542 Gilmore St. and 1611 Baker St. not for publication

city or town Baltimore

vicinity N/A

state Maryland

code MD

county

Baltimore City

code 510

zip code 21217

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

N/A

4. National Park Service Certification

N/A

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

2

Noncontributing

buildings

sites

structures

objects

Total

2

SDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
(St. Gregory's School and Rectory)  
(Baltimore City, MD)

B-4438

(Page 2)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

#### 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION  
RELIGION

Sub: church school  
church-related residence

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION

Sub: Religious Facility

#### 7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Renaissance

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite

roof

walls BRICK, granite

other marble, sandstone

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance See continuation sheet.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Religion

Education

Community Planning and Development

SDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
(St. Gregory's School and Rectory)  
(Baltimore City, MD)

B-4439

(Page 3)

Period of Significance 1884-1940

Significant Dates 1884-1901

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet.

#### 9. Major Bibliographical References

##### Maps

Bromley, G.W. and Co. Atlas of the City of Baltimore, Vol. 1. Philadelphia: 1885, 1896.

Hopkins, G.M. Map of the City of Baltimore, Maryland. 1876, 1877.

Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps, Baltimore, Maryland, Vols. 2,3, and 7. New York: 1890, 1901, 1914, 1928.

Simmons, Isaac. 1852 Revision of the Thomas H. Poppleton Map. Baltimore: 1852.

See continuation sheet.

#### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .333 acres

SDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
(St. Gregory's School and Rectory)  
(Baltimore City, MD)

B-4439

(Page 4)

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	—	—	—	3	—	—
2	—	—	—	4	—	—

— See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Block 22, Lot 10

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries are based on a city lot(s) retaining original property lines. The boundaries contain the two significant, extant buildings of the late 19th-century church complex.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Jo Lampl & Kay Fanning/Architectural Historians  
organization Robinson & Associates date July 1992  
street & number 1710 Connecticut Ave., NW telephone (202) 234-2333  
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20009

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Roman Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore  
street&number 1542 N. Gilmore telephone  
city or town Baltimore state MD zip code 21217

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 5 & 6 Page 1

St. Gregory's School and Rectory  
name of property  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
county and State

HISTORIC CONTEXT

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture, Landscape  
Architecture, and Community Planning; Social/Education/Cultural

Resource Type:

Category: building(s)

Historic Environment: urban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): religion

Known Design Source: none

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

St. Gregory's School & Rectory  
name of property  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
county and State

DESCRIPTION

**St. Gregory's Church (former school)** is a two-story, three-bay brick building constructed in 1884 in the Renaissance Revival style. Its design reveals its understated origin as a school, rather than a purpose-built church. It is a single freestanding block with a low-pitched front gable roof and molded architrave cornice. The facade is a series of rather flat planes with shallow recessed panels. The central bay breaks forward slightly and is given prominence by its own pediment. The building is set on a coursed rough-faced stone foundation of granite.

The lower floor of the front portion of the church has square recessed panels; today, those on the facade contain signs. The front section, one bay deep, forms a narthex, made distinct from the sanctuary block by incorporating larger arched openings on its upper level; these are set in larger recessed panels capped with corbelled brick. The central, projecting bay has molded brick piers, beltcourses, and an entablature crowned by a small pediment holding a bulls-eye ventilator window. In the first floor an arched doorway, with brick hood and stone keystone block, is set in a pedimented brick aedicular surround. Above this is an opening, now filled in but likely a window originally; it holds a cross. The two facade windows and those in the first bay of the side elevation are arched with one-over-one lights and transoms. The remaining first-story windows in the side elevations are one-over-one, flat-arched openings with smooth stone sills. The second-story nave windows are plate glass set in flat-arched openings, placed in recessed panels.

**St. Gregory's Rectory**, located at 1611 Baker Street, is a contributing ancillary building, the Rectory of St. Gregory's Church. This Richardsonian Romanesque Revival building dates from 1896-1901 and is constructed of coursed rough-faced ashlar granite (Port Deposit or gneiss). It previously adjoined the original St. Gregory's church, which has since been demolished; the structure is now freestanding. The main three-story, three-bay block has a vertical emphasis, emulating the rowhouses that surround it.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7      Page 2

St. Gregory's School & Rectory  
name of property  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
county and State

This block has a flat roof, with its parapet forming a "pediment" over the facade and a modillioned wood cornice below. The facade has a stone watertable, and stone sills, lintels, and beltcourses. Adjoining this main block at a 90-degree angle is a slightly lower three-story gabled wing, set back from the street, with three small staggered windows. A one-story block is built in the angle, flush with the main facade; its left wall is a remnant of the demolished rear portion of the church. The first- and third-floor windows of the rectory and the front door have pointed stone arches; other windows have flat lintels. All openings contain replacement one-over-one, double-hung sash windows with flat heads.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 1

St. Gregory's School & Rectory  
name of property  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
county and State

SIGNIFICANCE

Within the survey area, St. Gregory's Roman Catholic Church at Gilmor and Baker Streets is one of the oldest congregations still located at its original site. As such, it is one of the few churches in the survey area to adapt to cultural and demographic forces. In the late 19th century, St. Gregory's was one of a handful of churches in the western portions of the city to accommodate African American worshippers in its churches--although it treated them as second-class citizens. Beginning in the 1950s, the racial composition of the congregation changed and the church served both African American and white congregants. Today, St. Gregory's serves an African American congregation.

Unfortunately, the congregation's most significant structure, its original stone church, was recently demolished for lack of maintenance funds. The original St. Gregory's Catholic Church plant was constructed in 1884. It consisted of the stone church, a brick parochial school (currently serving as the church), and a rectory immediately to the school's south. These structures stood on land formerly owned by A.F. Clayton.

A rectory was built at 1611 Baker Street between 1896 and 1901, at which point the original rectory became a lyceum (or, lecture hall). In addition, the church operated a convent out of rowhouses just to the south on Gilmor Streets. In 1901, the convent was housed in 1514 Gilmor Street. By 1914, it had expanded to include 1512 Gilmor Street.

Representative of the Catholic Church's all-encompassing approach, the original site was a campus of religious structures. Not only the church, but the school buildings were a great source of pride:

From a few scattered and impoverished families at the beginning of the century, it has grown to a great, thoroughly cosmopolitan organization whose ideals, energy and wealth are everywhere attested by its magnificent churches and schools, colleges and charitable institutions. From its embryonic state in the early days of the republic it has evolved into a great church whose discipline,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

St. Gregory's School & Rectory  
**name of property**  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
**county and State**

energetic press, well-graded school system and conscientious spiritual administration make it a great power for the uplifting of mankind.<sup>1</sup>

While not much is known about the early years of the parish, it is known that St. Gregory's was attended by African Americans in the community early on, although they were not treated equally with white parishioners. Instead they had to sit in the balconies or in roped-off pews at the rear of the church.<sup>2</sup> The church may have served a large immigrant population, based on the large concentration of Irish and/or German Catholics in the survey area. St. Gregory's Church's first pastor was Reverend Owen B. Corrigan.

Beginning in 1973, this purpose-built school has functioned as the parish's church. Parochial schools were first established in Maryland in the early 19th century. They were joined by public schools in 1864, when the Maryland Constitution established the first Public School Board. The Catholic churches were the only schools in the survey area to have their own schools. St. Gregory's was the first parochial school in the survey area; the second was St. Peter Claver's school, first established in the basement of its church in 1888. The Catholic schools were typically opened with consent of the city Archbishop and operated by an affiliated sisterhood. The need for parochial schools was often voiced as a need to retain immigrant Catholics in a country so predominantly Protestant:

. . . Unless our immigrants settled in communities of some size or in close proximity to a church, they were lost to Catholicity, their perversion being not the result of false reasoning or bad will but lack of instruction, absence of a priest. . . They found themselves in a community that was Protestant. They could not instruct their children. The social life was entirely non Catholic. . . . The children

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<sup>1</sup> John B. McMahon, "The Purpose and Claims of the Extension Movement," Extension, the Catholic Church Extension Society, May 1907.

<sup>2</sup> St. Peter Claver Catholic Church, 100 Years Dedication, p. 18.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8      Page 3

St. Gregory's School & Rectory  
name of property  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
county and State

grew up without the sacraments. . . and as their social life  
was with Protestants, they married Protestants.

The congregation reached its height in 1921, with a membership of 5,000. Twenty years later, the membership had declined greatly, and by 1951 there were only 35 children enrolled in the school. The school closed that year. In 1954, the membership was 507 parishioners, a majority of whom were African American. In 1971, the Rectory became a home for alcoholics.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9      Page 1

St. Gregory's School & Rectory  
name of property  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
county and state

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Maryland Churches United. Christian Bicentennial Witness. Baltimore:  
undated.

St. Gregory the Great Church. St. Gregory the Great Celebrates 100 Years.  
Baltimore: 1984.

Tyson, Rev. Joseph V., S.S.J., Ed. "What We've Heard - - - What We've Seen."  
St. Peter Claver Catholic Church Centennial (1888-1988). Baltimore: 1988.

SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER/PENN-NORTH  
RECONNAISSANCE-LEVEL SURVEY FORM

Survey No. B-4439

Neg. No. 5/16

Historic Name St. Gregory's School and Rectory

Current Name/Use St. Gregory the Great Church

Address(es) 1542 Gilmore Street & 1611 Baker Street

Resource/Property Type

☐ Rowhouses  
☐ Commercial Structure  
☒ Public/Institutional Building  
☐ Public Housing  
☐ Site  
☐ Other

☐ Attached  
☒ Freestanding

Note: \_\_\_\_\_

Stories 2

Primary Material brick Secondary Material fieldstone, marble, wood

Roof Form gable

No. of Bays in Unit/Facade 3 If Rowhouse: ☐ Flat Front ☐ Swell Front ☐ Porch

Window Type: ☐ Double-Hung ☐ 1/1 Sash ☐ 2/2 Sash ☐ 2/1 Sash ☐ Other Sash ☐ Transom

Door Type: ☐ Single-Leaf ☒ Double-Leaf  
☐ Number of panels (if visible)  
☒ Transom

Architectural Style Renaissance Revival Date c. 1852-1901

**Noteworthy Features:** Architrave cornice, projecting center bay. Arched and flat-headed windows set in recessed entrance, recessed panels on second story. Brick beltcourses. Fieldstone foundation. First floor square inset brick panels.

Alterations: ☐ Formstone ☐ Stucco  
☐ Vinyl/Aluminum ☒ Window/Door Changes  
☐ Awnings ☐ Missing Cornice Elements  
☐ First-Floor Use Change ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Status: ☒ Occupied ☐ Vacant ☐ Mixed

NR Evaluation: ☒ Contributing ☐ Non-Contributing

Recommended for Intensive Level: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Surveyor: Joey Lampl  
Date: February-April 1992

Affiliation: Robinson & Associates





N. MOUNT

N. GILMORE

B-4439  
St. Gregory's School and Rectory  
Baltimore, MD  
Sanborn Map, 1901

WINDSOR

PRESSTMAN

ST.

VINCENT

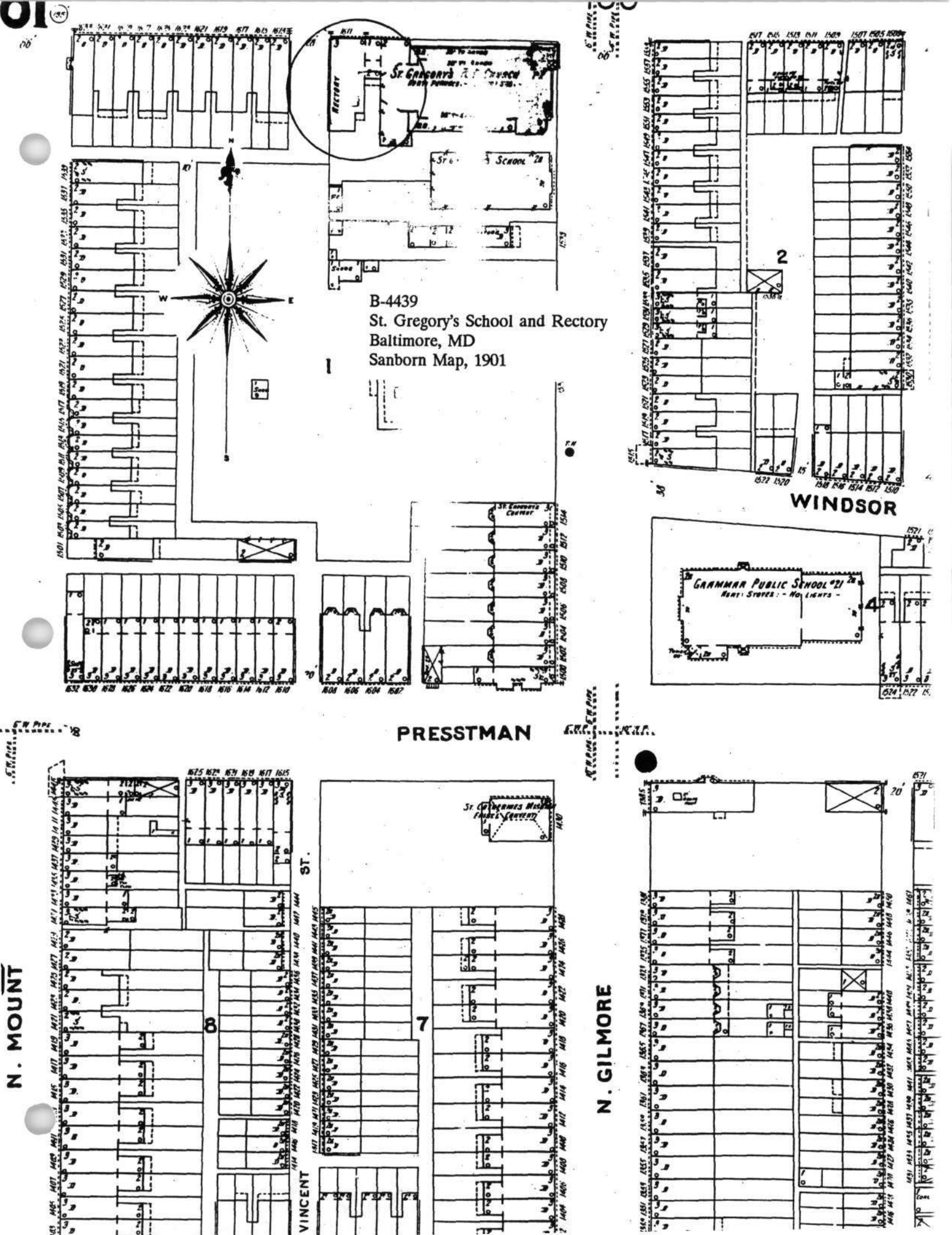
7

8

2

GRAMMAR PUBLIC SCHOOL #21  
RENT: STORES - NO LIGHTS

St. Vincent's Mission  
Church (Catholic)







B-4439  
St. Gregory's School and Rectory  
Baltimore, MD  
Baltimore West Quadrangle





SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER / PENN-NORTH

#B-4439

BALTIMORE, MD

ELIZABETH QO LAMPL

MARCH 1992

CITY OF BALTIMORE, COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL AND  
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

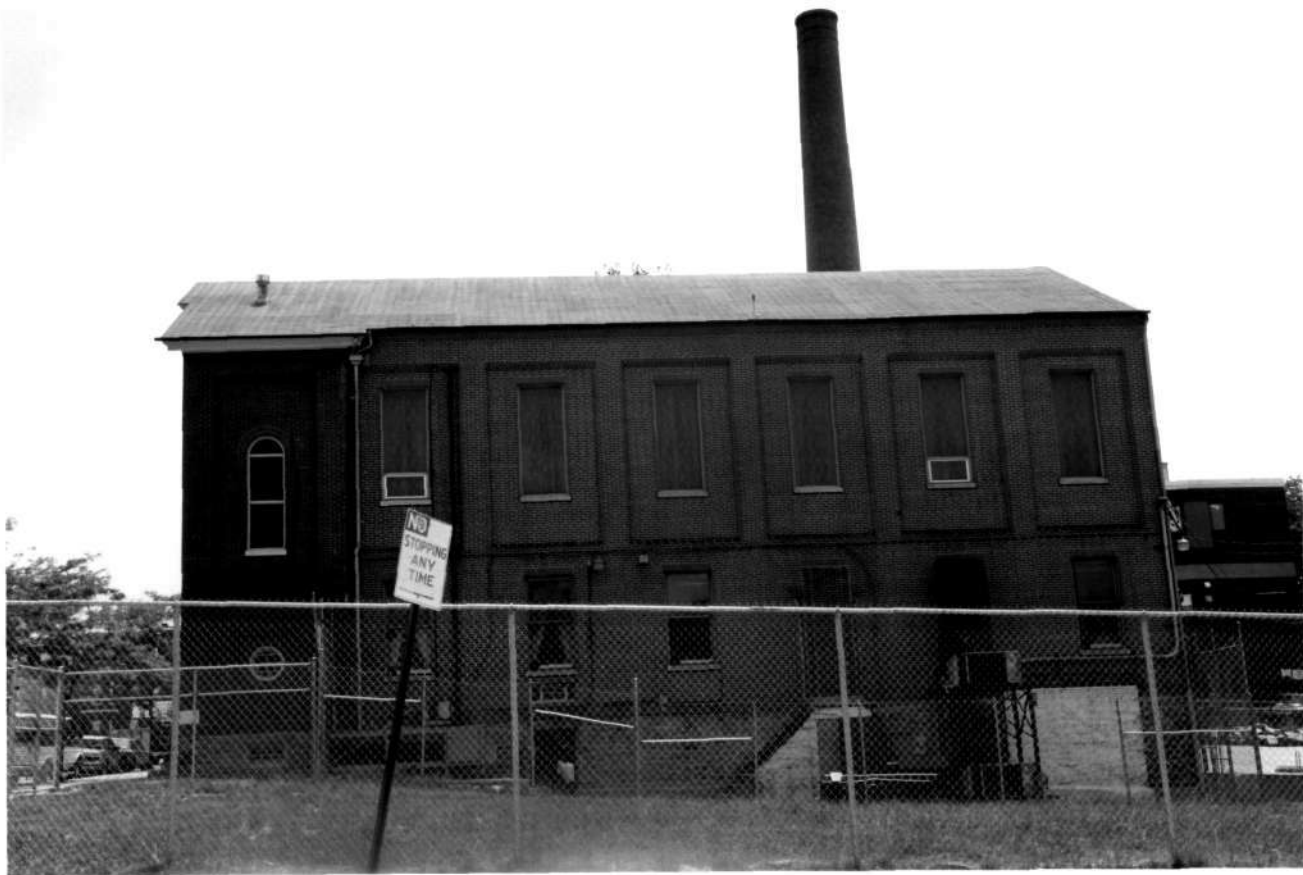
HISTORIC: RECTORY, ST. GREGORY'S R.C. CHURCH

CURRENT: RECTORY(?), 1611 BAKER ST.

VIEW FACING SOUTHWEST

ROLL 5/NEG 18

1 of 2



Sandtown-Winchester/Penn-North

#B-442A

Baltimore, MD

Leonard Jackson

July 1992

City of Baltimore, Commission for Historical and Architectural  
Preservation

Historic: St. Gregory's School and Rectory

Current: St. Gregory the Great Church

1542 Gilman Street + 1611 Baker Street  
NORTH ELEVATION

Roll 9/neg 8

2 of 3



SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER/PENN NORTH

#B-4439

BALTIMORE, MD

ELIZABETH Qo LAMPL

MARCH 1992

CITY OF BALTIMORE, COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

HISTORIC: ST. GREGORY'S SCHOOL (ROMAN CATHOLIC)

CURRENT: ST. GREGORY THE GREAT CHURCH, 1542 GILMOR ST.

VIEW FACING NORTHWEST

ROLL 5/NEG 16

3 of 3